

For the Children

THE NAUGHTY PARROT.

Once there was a little girl who spent the summer days
With sheep and cows and pigeons and horses out to graze,
And other gentle comrades. They all had pleasant ways
Except a horrid parrot with a very brilliant head,
Who never made polite remarks, but always moaned instead,
"Oh, ah, wah! Ah, hoop-bah! I—don't—want to go to bed!"

Now all these other animals were very, very good;
They neighed or they brayed, or they crowed or purred or
moored;
They barked or they bleated, or they quacked, clucked or
cooed;
But still that hateful parrot, he dropped his gaudy head,
And with a twinkle in his eye he dolorously said,
"Oh, ah, wah! Ah, hoop-bah! I—don't—want to go to bed!"
—Exchange.

UP TO MISCHIEF.

Phyllis, Eunice, Helen, Louis and Joe were great friends, and although they were usually quite good, they were apt to get into mischief, like most children. One merry sunny day they were all together on the little bridge which crossed the creek, not far from their houses.

"Look," cried Phyllis suddenly. "There are crabs in the water—three, four, five—lots of them!"

The children leaned over the railing and looked down into the clear water. "I wish we could catch some and keep them for pets," said Joe.

"Funny kind of pets!" Eunice laughed. "Would you tie ribbons and bells around their necks, like kittens?"

"You couldn't, you know," explained Helen. "They haven't any necks, exactly."

"I have an idea!" cried Louis. "There's an old crab net up in our barn, and I'll go and get it, and some meat and string, and we'll fish for crabs."

"Oh, yes, let's!" cried Phyllis, who was always ready for something interesting. So Louis ran off and in a short while came back with the crab net and meat and basket. "All you have to do," he explained, "is to tie the meat on a string and let it, down into the water. Then, when the crab catches hold of it, you pull him up softly to the top of the water, and somebody else takes the crab net and scoops him up."

It was very exciting. Louis let down the meat, and almost at once a big crab caught hold of it! Slowly, Louis pulled him up to the edge of the water, and in another instant Joe had caught him in the net and dumped him into the basket.

All the afternoon the children kept on catching crab after crab, till they had seventeen. Then the sun began to sink, and the shadows stretched out long and weird.

"We must go home. It's supper time," said Helen.

"I wonder," said Louis, slowly jiggling the crabs in the basket, "if mother will let us keep the crabs for pets?"

"I don't believe she will," Helen answered, shaking her head doubtfully.

Louis wrinkled his forehead in thought for a moment. "I will put them into my wash-bowl!" he exclaimed, joyfully, "and we won't say anything about

them for a day or two. We'll wait until we can tell mother and father what good crabs they are, and what nice manners they have, and how they are no trouble at all. Come on home. We'll go in at the back door and take the basket up to my room before any one sees us."

So they went home, and slipped quietly in at the kitchen door of the gray stone house. When they were up in the room that Louis and Joe shared, they shook the crabs out of the basket into the wash-bowl. "They won't be any trouble at all," said Joe, confidently, and then they heard some one coming and scurried downstairs.

That night Mrs. Darcy was surprised to find both boys quite ready to go upstairs when bed-time came. Usually they begged and begged to stay up just a few minutes longer. They found their crabs crawling restlessly around in the wash-bowl, trying to get acquainted with their strange new home. Louis and Joe watched them awhile, and then went to bed and slept peacefully.

When Louis awoke in the morning, the first thing he noticed, as he lazily opened one eye, was something moving slowly across the floor. He rubbed his eyes and looked closer. "Oh!" he cried, sitting up in bed, "it's a crab."

"A what?" asked Joe, sleepily.

"One of those crabs," replied Louis, excitedly. "It has crawled out of the wash-bowl. Look and see if there are any more around."

"Yes!" cried Joe, sitting up. "There's another by the bureau!" Then he stood up in bed and looked over at the wash-bowl. "There's only one left in the bowl; there must be sixteen crabs crawling around the room!"

"Time to get up!" called Mr. Darcy's voice outside the door. "Are you boys awake?"

"Yes, father," said Joe, truthfully; but he did not jump up, and neither did Louis.

"I don't care to get up just yet, do you?" said Louis. "You can't tell when you might put your foot on a crab, with sixteen loose."

Joe plunged down again on the bed and pulled the cover over him. "They couldn't climb up the legs of the bed, could they?" he asked. "O-o-o—there's another crawling into your shoe, and there's the last one of all coming out of the wash-bowl! There he goes plump on the floor!"

"Wish we hadn't gone crabbing," sighed Louis, mournfully.

"Are you boys getting up?" called Mr. Darcy again.

"N-no," quivered Louis.

"Why not?" asked Mr. Darcy.

"'Cause we're 'fraid to!" wailed Joe.

"Afraid to get up! Nonsense!" said Mr. Darcy, and he opened the door and went in.

"Look out, father, the room's full of crabs!" cried Louis.

"Crabs!" echoed Mr. Darcy, astonished.

"Seventeen of them," said Joe. "We had them in the wash-bowl, and they got out."

"Seventeen crabs in this room!" exclaimed Mr. Darcy, and he went away at once. In a few minutes he came back with a pair of tongs and a shovel.

"Where are they?" he asked.